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Co-Chair Senator Gerratana, Co-Chair Representative Urban, Senator Musto, Representative Fawcett, Senator Suzio, Representative Wood and Members of the Committee:

My name is Allison Petit. I am currently a senior at Central Connecticut State University. I am studying Political Science and History. Four years ago I attended Plainville High School. Like most high schools there is a required biology course. Part of this course requires students to dissect. When I was a sophomore at Plainville High I signed up for Biology as required by the school's curriculum. When I approached my teacher to ask for an alternative a month prior to the dissection I was informed that there would be an alternative for me. The day of the dissection I was told that I would not have to be the one dissecting I could just watch my lab partner complete the task. I am morally opposed to dissection and did not find this to be a suitable alternative. When I told my teacher this was not suitable she responded that I would have to find my own alternative and then was placed in a separate room with another teacher and a small class. I was made to feel like a social outcast due to the teacher's explanation of why I had to be in the room. The alternative that was finally given after several days was the dissection manual with over one hundred questions. Most of the questions asked specifics that could only be answered through actually dissecting the animal. The alternative took well over two weeks to complete with having to go after school to get help with questions I simply could not answer. I was told by several professors that I was just being squeamish and did not want to do the work. I can assure you I am not a squeamish person and the reason I am opposed to dissection is purely on moral grounds. As I went to sign up for my Junior year classes I was told there were only two science electives that I could choose from while every other student was allowed to choose from at least eight. It is almost impossible to complete your high school career without taking at least one elective that requires dissection. Even though I was an honor student I was told I would not be allowed to sign up for those classes because I did not dissect. I was told that even if I had a religious reason for not dissecting I would not be allowed to take those classes. I even had to go to a local community college to complete my degree because there were so few classes I was allowed to take at the high school. By not allowing students to opt for an alternative to dissection schools are discriminating against students who have a moral objection to dissection. There are copious alternatives that are usually free to schools. Students who object to dissection are not trying to get out of doing work, they are merely trying to stick to their principles on something they are deeply against.